

# THE MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN SOCIETY

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

An international forum devoted to furthering knowledge and appreciation of plants and gardens suited to the mediterranean climate regions of the world

issue 13  
Winter/Spring 2003



In Mt. Diablo State Park  
Photo by Neil Mishalov  
<http://mishalov.com>

## Spring Branch Events

### Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 10am-4pm - East Bay

Join us for a **walk on Mt Diablo**, one of those rare sites where the flora of the northern part of California meets and overlaps with the flora of the southern part of the state, with the incomparable **Glenn Keator**, who will show us some of the highlights of the overlapping flora.

As many of you know, Glenn is a fantastic teacher and consummate botanist, and among many other books, the author of *The Plants of East Bay Parks*.

Space is limited for this adventure; cost is \$10 for MGS members and \$15 for non-members.

### May 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> weekend - Carmel

A **Garden Tour** not to be missed, according to our Advisory Board member Richard Turner!

We are proud to announce a tour of gardens and nurseries in Monterey County, including Carmel, Carmel Valley and Monterey. The tour will include a variety of gardens from the dry inland valleys to the fog-influenced coast. There will be a variety of garden themes from modern interpretations to historical examples, and garden designers will be present to share their insights.

Space is limited, so reserve your space early! Cost is \$45 for MGS members, \$60 for non-members, and includes a box lunch on Saturday. Accommodations on your own, but the area abounds with great places to stay.

Call Sue Ann Manners at 925-254-0226 for information and to reserve a space in either/both of these events.

### Impressions from Foreign Branch Heads of the Oct 2002 Annual General Meeting in Pasadena

#### Freda Cox, UK Branch Head:

"Be very, very sorry all those of you who missed the AGM in Los Angeles last October! What a wonderful event and so superbly organized by the Southern Californian branch committee. Our thanks must go to everyone who helped organize such a wonderful and interesting AGM."

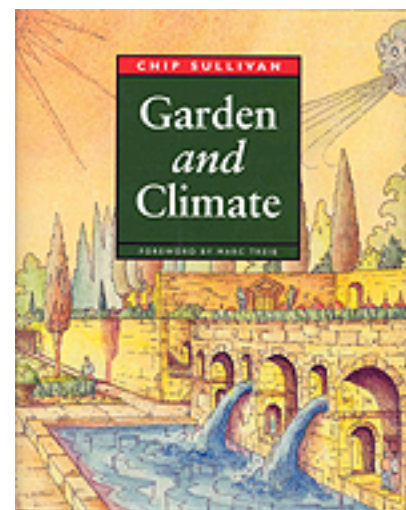
#### Virginia Kennett, Southern Australia Branch Head:

"I attended the Annual General Meeting of the MGS, which this year was held in Pasadena, California. It was not just a meeting but days jam-packed with garden tours and social events. The Californian branch members co-ordinated the occasion with jaw-dropping efficiency and great warmth and generosity. It makes communication so much easier when names become faces. It seems trite to say it, but a shared interest in gardens can overcome many barriers, especially those of distance and language."

### Sunday, April 27, 2-4pm – East Bay

**Chip Sullivan**, U.C. Berkeley faculty member and author of the new book *Garden and Climate* will give a talk for mediterranean gardeners at the U.C. Botanical Garden in Berkeley. You'll be able to purchase your copy of the book, which will be reviewed in the upcoming issues of *Pacific Horticulture* and *The Mediterranean Garden*, and Dr.

Sullivan will be happy to inscribe it for you. It promises to be a scintillating and thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. We are very pleased to be co-sponsoring this event with the Garden, and look forward to seeing you there! The Garden entrance fee waved for MGS members.





***Filipendula vulgaris*** Moench  
(synonyms: *F. hexapetala* Gillib. *Spiraea filipendula* L., *Ulmaria filipendula* (L.) Hill.)

## Dropwort

I've recently seen this old-fashioned plant appear again in local nurseries. Without being familiar with this species, you might easily pass it up without further notice, but after seeing its quiet beauty while flowering

in a garden, you might not make the mistake again.

The first time my own eyes took in this sight was while passing a garden in a former neighborhood. I recall taking brief mental stock of how sadly neglected this plot was, weedy and unkempt – clearly a gardener was in residence at one time here, but no longer. Over in the corner of a clearing at the center of the garden were these tufts of ferny foliage, happy in spite of the inattention. I examined them as well as I could (without drawing too much attention to myself!) – their inscrutability was intriguing to me. Later in spring, these foliage clumps supported delicate upright stems, from 12-18in., of the fluffiest, creamy white flowers – surprising in contrast to its garden companions. From this flowering I was eventually able to deduce the identity of this little charmer.

Dropwort apparently has significance in herbalist history, thus named because it is, as stated in *The English Physician*, ca 1651, “very effectual to open the passages of the

Urine, and help the Strangury, and all other pains of the Bladder and Reins, helping mightily to expel the Stone in the Kidnies or Bladder, and the Gravel also”. The writer goes on to state: “This sendeth forth many Leavs some bigger, some lesser, set on each side of a middle Rib, and each of them dented about the edges . . . among which riseth up one or more Stalks two or three Foot high, with like Leavs growing thereon, and sometimes also divided into other Branches spreading at the top into many white sweet smelling Flowers. . . It groweth in many places of this Land, in the Corners of dry Fields and Meadows, and their Hedg Sides.”

Apparently the toughness and drought tolerance of this species is owed at least in part to the small tubers on its roots. Preferring average to poor soils, winter moisture, and tolerant of dry summers, this handsome little plant is very suitable for gracing the front of dry borders in sun or part shade, providing an attractive seasonal show in late spring.

Seán O'Hara

## Calendar of Events

### March 6<sup>th</sup> (Thursday), 7:30pm, San Francisco

**The Carizzo Plain** - (between San Luis Obispo & Kern Counties), with **Stew Winchester** (instructor, Diablo Community College), Hosted by the Yerba Buena Chapter of the CNPS and Strybing Arboretum; for more information contact Barbara Pitschel, (415) 282-5066

### March 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> (Sat-Sun), San Luis Obispo \*

**Spring Weekend** - the first meeting of the newly formed **Central California Branch of the MGS**. The itinerary includes visits/tours of:

- the Leaning Pine Arboretum on the Cal Poly campus
- the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden
- 3 private gardens designed by Jeffrey G. Smith, owner of Jeffrey G. Smith Landscape Design; as well as Patricia Cullinan, a local landscape designer/contractor
- a visit to Hearst Castle, with a garden emphasis

To reserve the final few slots for this weekend event or find out more about the new Central California Branch, contact the Branch heads:

Michelle C. Torres-Grant, (805) 473-2717,  
mgsmichelle@charter.net  
Christy O'Hara, (805) 772-7671,  
centralcalmgs@msn.com

### March 30<sup>th</sup> (Sunday), 10am-4pm, East Bay \*

**A walk on Mt Diablo** with author/educator (and MGS member) **Glenn Keator** – see cover page

### March 27<sup>th</sup> (Thursday), 10:30am, Napa

**Our Mediterranean Climate – what does it mean and why should we care?**

**Seán O'Hara**, co-chair of the No. California Branch of the MGS, will again give his slide presentation about our mediterranean climate and its relevance to local horticulture as well as lifestyle, art, and design – this time to the Napa County Master Gardeners. For more information, contact Nancy Wilson, (707) 942-4234, wroseland@earthlink.net

### April-June, 10am-4pm, San Francisco

**Up Close and Floral: a Pollinator's View of California Natives** - an exhibit of photographs taken through a microscope by Maggie Ely. Daily except major holidays, Helen Crocker Russell Library, Strybing Arboretum & Botanical Gardens, (415) 661-1316, x303.

### April 3rd (Thursday), 7:30pm, San Francisco

**Idria Serpentine Barrens**, a lecture by **Julie Ann Delgado**, a meeting of the California Native Plant Society, Yerba Buena Chapter; call (415) 282-5066 for info.

### April 9th (Wednesday), 7:30pm, Los Altos

**The California Native Habitat Garden**, with **Leana Sims**; the monthly meeting of the Western Horticultural Society; call (650) 967-5408 for info.

(continued on page 3, bottom left)

## Foreign MGS Branch Invitations:

### Hania, Western Crete

**May 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>** (Thursday-Monday)

This tour will be organized and led by MGS members George Sfikas, a renowned expert and writer on the Greek flora, and his wife Chrysanthi.

Members in Greece and throughout the world who are interested in learning more details should contact the Greek branch of the MGS as soon as possible:

Fleur Pavlidis - fleur@hol.gr,  
fax +30 210 6643089, or write to:  
Box 14, Peania GR-190 02 Greece.

### Shropshire, Herefordshire, & Staffordshire, England

**Jun 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>** (Wed-Sat)

The English Branch extends an invitation to MGS branches worldwide to join them in visiting gardens in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Staffordshire.

Dinner, bed and breakfast in comfortable hotel. Welcome reception at Hall Farm. Closing dinner at superb local restaurant on Saturday evening 14th June. In between, lots of exciting gardens and talks! For more details and bookings, contact:

Freda Cox, Hall Farm,  
Sidbury, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 6PY  
tel 01746 718547; fax 01746 718707  
Freda@fredacox.freeserve.co.uk

(continued from page 2, bottom)

**April 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>** (Sat-Sun), 10am-5pm, **Richmond**

**My Big Fat Spring Party – Annie's Annuals Spring Open House.** Annie's Annuals' propagator, Anni Jensen, will also open her own garden for visitors – a garden that receives no water whatsoever! There will also be music, treasure hunts, raffles, talks, their new display gardens, and "the most delicious Greek food in the world" courtesy of Annie's Greek mom! For more information, call (510) 215 1326, or see their web site – [www.AnniesAnnuals.com](http://www.AnniesAnnuals.com).

**April 13<sup>th</sup>** (Sunday), 1:30-3pm, **Santa Cruz**

**South African Salvias: Low Water Plants** - with **Betsy Clebsh**; Hosted by UC Santa Cruz Arboretum; admission \$10; for more information contact the arboretum, (831) 427-2998

**May 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>** (Saturday-Sunday), **Carmel** \*

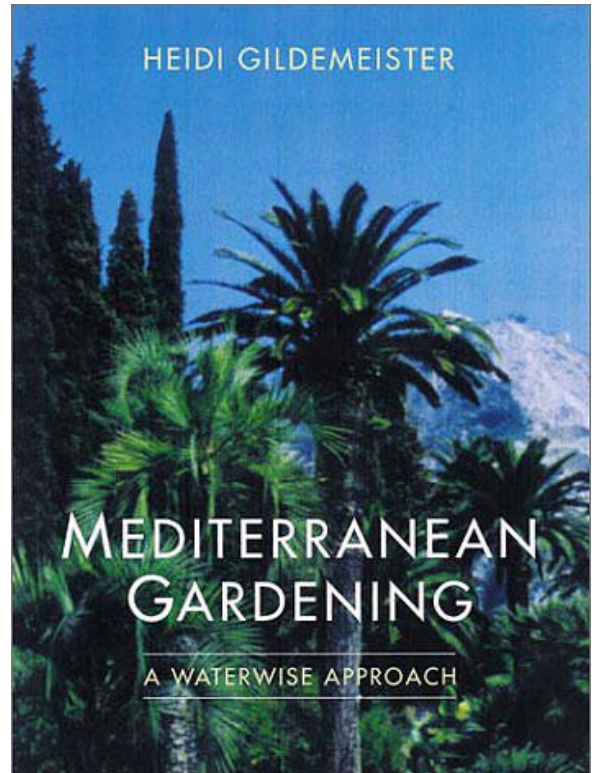
A "not to be missed" **Garden Tour** – see cover page

\* - MGS Sponsored Event

Seán O'Hara would like to thank the following donors of plant material to his recent talks, providing interesting plants for discussion and as donations to the sponsoring societies.

**Annie's Annuals**

**Roger Reynolds Nursery  
& Carriage Stop  
Menlo Park**



Just re-published by UC Press in January, 2003:

**Heidi Gildemeister's  
Mediterranean Gardening  
A Waterwise Approach**

208 pages, 7½ x 10¼ inches,  
356 color illustrations  
(available in hardcover or paperback)

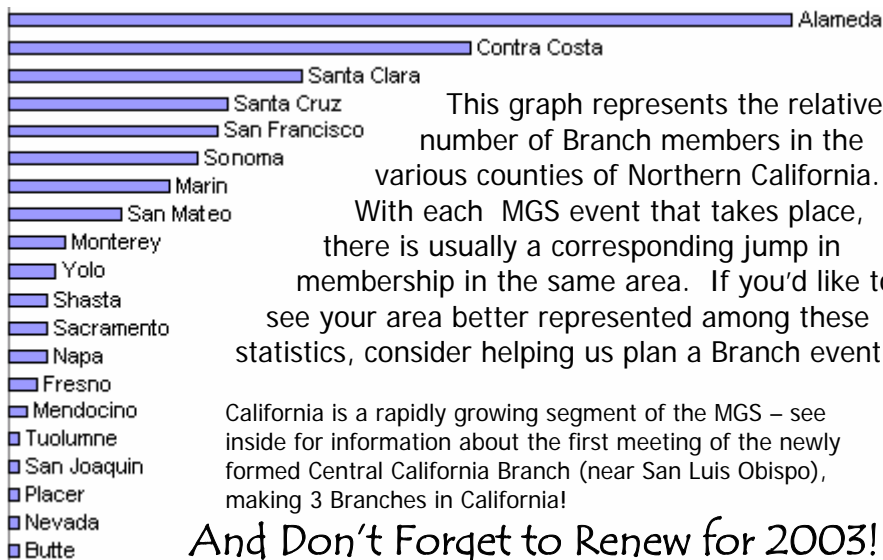
This book is already a classic among mediterranean climate gardeners, and perhaps one of the most commonly suggested books for learning about gardening in this special region. In past years, supplies of this book have been hard to find. Now revised for and published in California, this should no longer be a problem.

Not only does Heidi Gildemeister list for us over 1,000 plants in nearly 500 genera, she also includes chapters on the mediterranean climate, common garden environments, water management, soil & mulch, planting, weeds, and much more. This is an excellent and useful book for both novice and professional.

"This is no ordinary book on drought-tolerant plants, but the accumulated wisdom of twenty years spent learning about the Mediterranean climate, and its plants and soils. The learning was not the casual process of one warned by municipal authorities that water is becoming scarce, but the urgent seeking for knowledge of an intelligent gardener entirely dependent on rainfall. . . . The pictures, too, are delightfully different from those we have come to expect in books on waterwise gardening."

*Pacific Horticulture*

# Where are our Branch members?



This graph represents the relative number of Branch members in the various counties of Northern California. With each MGS event that takes place, there is usually a corresponding jump in membership in the same area. If you'd like to see your area better represented among these statistics, consider helping us plan a Branch event!

California is a rapidly growing segment of the MGS – see inside for information about the first meeting of the newly formed Central California Branch (near San Luis Obispo), making 3 Branches in California!

## And Don't Forget to Renew for 2003!

Payment of dues for the Mediterranean Garden Society includes you in this Branch if your address is within our range or if you specify branch inclusion directly on the membership form. You can join at any of our events or send your application separately.

For a membership form, contact Sue Ann Manners, (925) 254-0226, or visit the MGS web site:

[www.MediterraneanGardenSociety.org](http://www.MediterraneanGardenSociety.org)

This newsletter is produced in Fall, Winter, & Spring (dormant in Summer) to announce the events and news of the No. Calif. Branch of the MGS  
Editor: Seán O'Hara - sean@support.net - fax (707) 667-1173

We invite you to join the **Mediterranean Garden Society** and learn more about gardening in our unique and desirable climate. Memberships are for the calendar year (Jan-Dec), and all members receive the Society Journal, ***The Mediterranean Garden***, containing articles written by members worldwide. Joining mid-year, you will receive all Journal issues for that year.

Annual membership is ~~\$30~~

Life membership is ~~\$300~~

Send your personal check or credit card information to:

**The MGS Secretary**  
**Sparoza, P.O.Box 14**  
**GR-190 02 Peania, GREECE**  
(International letter postage is ~~80€~~)

tel/fax: (30 1) 664 3089

email: [bd@hol.gr](mailto:bd@hol.gr)



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MGS Memberships are for the Calendar Year – Don't Forget to Renew for 2003!